

18 November 1977

SUBJECT : Proposed Responses to ADICI's Questions Regarding  
Grade Reduction Targets for FYs 78, 79 and 80

REFERENCE: Note for Comptroller fr ADICI dtd 29 Oct 77, subject:  
Grade Reduction Targets

Proposed responses to the questions posed in referent memorandum are as follows:

1. What will be the effect on recruitment and retention for people serving in the designated classification titles?

Comment:

It is possible that we may have to recruit at slightly lower entry levels in some instances. In most cases, however, we do not foresee the grade changes appreciably affecting our recruitment efforts since entry level positions in most target occupations would likely be classified at or above the grade levels at which applicants would be hired. From a retention standpoint, there could be some minimal initial losses, although this is questionable since our occupations will continue to reflect grade patterns which equal or exceed those found elsewhere in government.

2. Is it fair and wise to go after seven low-graded series of jobs?

Comment:

The target areas were not predetermined but rather were the result of our analysis of Agency professional, technical and clerical occupations. The seven clerical series were very similar in nature and scope of duties and responsibilities to their counterpart series found elsewhere in government, and it could be reasonably expected that the average grades of these occupations would be comparable to the government-wide average grades for the same series. If this had been the case, these occupations would not have been listed. However, we found that these particular occupations reflected the greatest disparities between Agency and government-wide average grade. In light of these analyses, we could not select only one or several of these clerical series as targets for average grade reduction while permitting

the others which evidenced like degrees of overgrading to remain untouched. Thus, these seven series were the most easily identifiable and least defensible in terms of average grade. In short, the clerical series which have been initially selected for grade de-escalation targeting were the most inflated of some 44 professional, technical and clerical occupations reviewed in comparison with other government departments and agencies. We recognize, however, that future grade reduction efforts may well include other professional, technical and clerical series which, to a lesser extent, also appear to be overgraded.

3. If jobs are to be reduced, will the incumbents be given salary retention rights for two years?

Comment:

Salary retention is one of a number of procedures which could be employed if necessary. We feel, however, that employee turnover plus the use of Personal Rank Assignments would obviate the need for employee downgradings and salary retention in most instances. To subsequently eliminate the PRAs, it might be necessary to establish ground rules and a central mechanism to ensure that higher-level vacancies within a series are filled by employees who are serving on a Personal Rank basis. Salary retention might subsequently be employed if PRA employees refuse reassignment to a position which would accommodate their grade. This approach parallels, in principle, current thinking in the White House, Congress and the CSC on the subject of protecting employees against downgradings as a result of reorganization and position classification actions.